



**President: The Mayor of Hastings**

**Chairman: VACANCY**

## **NEW YEAR GREETINGS**

2021 is a New Year with new hope for us all. Covid-19 vaccines are being rolled out in Hastings, and although currently we are all in lockdown, the future is better than it was last year. Despite only being able to face to face meet six times in 2020 (including an AGM restricted to attendance by the HOTRA Committee only), HOTRA is determined to continue to keep its members informed. This newsletter is being sent digitally to those of you with internet access by Mailchimp, it is on our website, and the noticeboards in Courthouse Street and on Winkle Island will be updated with a paper copy.

## **SOS**

As you know, Dick Edwards stood down as our much-valued Chairman last year and was elected Vice President representing the newly formed charity Isabel Blackman Centre – In Perpetuity. We asked for nominations for his successor, but unfortunately so far no-one has come forward. Some of your Committee are taking turns to Chair meetings to cover this situation, but this is only temporary. We URGENTLY need a new Chair if this residents' association (the last in the Hastings area) is to survive. You'd need to live or work in the Old Town area. The tasks include:

- Keeping members informed, chiefly through newsletters
- Linking with all appropriate organisations in and around the Old Town
- Developing the work of the Association and agreeing an Annual Work Plan
- Promoting the best possible outcomes for residents and those who work here.

In a typical week this would involve 2/3 hours. If you would like to know more, Dick would be pleased to hear from you by email [dick@hotra.org.uk](mailto:dick@hotra.org.uk)

## **WORK PLAN FOR 2021**

We intend to increase our presence in the Old Town by the use of social media platforms, not just to advertise who we are and what we are but also to attract more members. Our website [www.hotra.org](http://www.hotra.org) gives more details.

We also want to highlight the urgent need to reduce plastic waste. Many of our local shops and businesses are doing their bit by using paper bags – we thank you for your efforts and encourage everyone to do more. The value of these shops and businesses in our local community has really been highlighted during this ongoing pandemic: shops selling food, a Post Office counter, hairdressers, locally-caught fresh fish, pubs providing a take-away food service, launderette, click-and-collect businesses, etc. A sincere thank you to all of you! For more details on buying local go to [www.amazinghastings.com](http://www.amazinghastings.com)

The Old Town is very fortunate in having its own cinema, the Electric Palace, and theatre, The Stables Theatre. As and when Covid-19 restrictions permit they will both need our support. For more details go to [www.electricpalacecinema.com](http://www.electricpalacecinema.com) and [www.http://stablestheatre.co.uk](http://www.stablestheatre.co.uk) or find them on will also need our ongoing support in due course.

A team of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have operated in the area for over 11 months now and HOTRA raised various issues such as drug taking at Swan Gardens at a meeting with PCSO Maria Barraclough. To build up "Community Intelligence" residents and businesses are asked to report any non-urgent items by email or phoning 101 or emergencies to 999.

If there is an issue you want HOTRA to add to our Work Plan please get in touch by email to [dick@hotra.org.uk](mailto:dick@hotra.org.uk)

## **ISABEL BLACKMAN CENTRE**

January started well with a further donation of £10,000 by an Old Town resident. We started off needing £450,000 in 2020, now the shortfall is just £15,000. Hopefully by the end of January that gap will be closed. The original date for completion was just before Christmas. There has been a helpful shift in the attitude at ESCC. They now realise that Covid-19 has caused delays to the Purchase appeal and have offered to extend the deadline by up to 6 months. However, the IBC- In Perpetuity Board have not lost sight of the continuing needs of Hastings older people. Travelling in hope our pencil schedule now reads January – complete the purchase; February – April – repairs and re-decorating; May – volunteer recruitment; June – soft opening. Sincere thanks to everyone who has helped.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership renewals are due this month, and a form is attached. You can pay by cheque payable to HOTRA or cash (please put your payment in an envelope marked HOTRA Subs. with your contact details and pop it through Treasurer Phil White's letterbox at 8½ Exmouth Place). Payment by bank transfer can also be made. Your ongoing support is much appreciated.

New members are always welcome. We thought it would be useful to put together a list of some of HOTRA's achievements over the years in supporting the Old Town community:

- Three crossings on the A259 in partnership with ESCC (HOTRA's first campaigning project) by Bourne Hall, Roebuck Street, and the bottom of Old London Road
- Leigh Dyer's stainless-steel structures to enhance Butlers Gap
- Isabel Blackman Centre purchase appeal (see previous report)
- Multi-Use Games Area, volleyball court and a large children's playground on the seafront
- Hastings Storytelling Festival
- Improvements to Winkle Island
- Support of the Old Town Surgery re-location to the old Ice House site in Rock-a-Nore Road
- Support of the creation of the Stade Open Space, Stade Hall, Jerwood Gallery (now Hastings Contemporary)
- Monitoring of the Hastings Country Park and Sea Bathing Water Quality Standards

**With best wishes to you all**

**HOTRA Committee**